

## 'Prep' combine to boost harvest efficiency

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. — Before you begin harvest this year, you'll probably take time to make sure your combine is in good working order. But if your pre-harvest combine checkup involves little more than changing the oil and greasing bearings, you can easily run into costly and time-consuming breakdowns.

"You should get your combine out of the shed at least two weeks before harvest begins," suggests Jack Winslow, Massey-Ferguson combine specialist. "Start by washing it down from top to bot-

tom. Then examine the entire machine.

"Once your combine is washed," Winslow explains, "it's easier to spot and replace worn belts and bearings, and check the condition of chains, shafts, sprockets, sheaves and pulleys."

Also check belt tension before you head for the field. Winslow notes that a good precautionary measure before winter storage is to loosen your belts to prevent permanent stretching during the cold weather. If you have taken that precaution, you'll now need to

retighten the belts to the tension recommended in the operator's manual.

Roller chains also should be in good condition. Refer to your manual to see which roller chains to oil; some will accumulate dirt if lubricated.

The MF specialist also recommends you look for, and replace worn bearings. One of the best ways to find bearing problems is to

start the combine and make a "listen check".

Winslow advises greasing all of the non-sealed bearings. This is especially important before harvest, because there's a tendency, in storage, for grease to be squeezed out of bearings which support heavy components.

"Then make sure tire pressures are up to recommended levels and the tires are in good condition,"

Winslow adds. "You might have a cut in a tire that you didn't notice last year. If you replace it now, you won't have to stop to change it once the busy season begins."

"It's a good idea to replace all broken or bent guards and knife sections. Then check the condition of the reel, and tines in the reel," Winslow points out.

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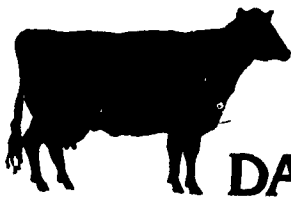
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